

Feedback

Defining Terms

In the January *Bulletin*, foreign catalog chairman Floyd Walker suggested that agreeing on a definition of *perfin* is important to future efforts to catalog foreign perfins. Walker suggested that foreign perfins be defined the same way as U.S. perfins:

A perfin is a perforated design, symbol, insignia, letter, or group of letters in a postage stamp placed there by an individual, organization, or government agency for the purpose of controlling the stamp's postal use.

That definition generated some feedback from members.

Jack Brandt (14-L), a Canadian specialist, says, "For most of the British (and former British) world, postage stamps were also used for fiscal purposes. Often this can be told by the cancel, but often it cannot. In places even the postal cancel was used as a fiscal cancel. Bob [Schwerdt, in the *World Perfins Catalog*] tried to separate them into his A & B categories, but I am sure many of his As were only used for fiscal purposes. I would say the problem is unresolvable. I very much want to see catalogs include perfins on fiscals, whether in a separate section or included in the main part (as in the Canadian catalog). Fiscal perfins also have many more problems with cancel perfins, which are actively collected, as well as punches. Classification and organization of all these is a problem I am thankful I don't have to resolve and I wish you luck in your attempts."

John Nussbickel (#2002), editor of the Austrian catalog, says he concurs with the definition of

perfins as presented, except that he believes postal cards (and by extension postal stationery) should be included.

Bob Schwerdt (#505-L), retired foreign catalog chairman, says he concurs with the definition but has concerns that fiscal perfins might be excluded from cataloging efforts.

Barry Pawson (#2706) writes from New Zealand, "That definition accepted by the U.S. catalog editor is fine except for the final phrase '...for the purpose of controlling the stamp's postal use.' In England, at least, that was not the case. A perfinned stamp could be used by anybody. I am sure the Post Office never checked to see that the perfinned stamp was used by the firm whose device appeared in the stamp. In the early days, stamps could be sold back to the Post Office. This was a great temptation to poorly paid office boys who could steal a few stamps and redeem their value at the local Post Office. The Post Office would not accept perfinned stamps in this way and so the perfin was only to prevent stamps being sold back to the Post Office. Even in New Zealand in more recent times (1984) when I asked for permission to have New Zealand stamps perfinned with the Great Britain Perfin Society's logo, I was reminded by the Director of Postal Services that the Post Office does not re-purchase perfined stamps. I hope this helps you find an acceptable definition for a perfin."